

LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Henry J. Mroz Administration Office
155 Merrimack Street
Lowell, Massachusetts 01852

Sokhary Chau
Mayor and Chairperson

Jackie Doherty
Vice-Chairperson

Susie Chhoun
Eileen Delrossi
Dominik Lay
Connie A. Martin
Stacey Thompson

Human Resources & Labor Relations
Subcommittee Meeting

Wednesday, January 11, 2023
Zoom – Virtual Meeting
6:30 p.m.

Tel: (978) 674-4324
Fax: (978) 937-7609

Subcommittee Members Present:	Chairperson Martin, Ms. Delrossi and Mr. Lay
School Committee Members Present:	Mayor Chau, Ms. Doherty and Ms. Thompson
School Department Personnel Present:	Dr. Boyd, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Hall, Chief Operating Officer Ms. Phillips, Chief Equity & Engagement Officer

This meeting is being held remotely in accordance with the Governor of Massachusetts' March 12, 2020 order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. 30A, Section 20.

Chairperson Martin called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m. The following agenda items were discussed:

1. SY2022 – 2023 Strategic Goals, Actions and Deliverables
2. Update from the City Law Department on Bid Process for Acquiring Outside Counsel for Internal Complaints Investigation

Ms. Martin asked Superintendent Boyd to share and discuss his strategic goals that include concrete measures with the Committee.

Superintendent Boyd thanked the Committee and stated there were only minor revisions. He stated he provided clear evidence of the best and most helpful.

The Committee started with Goal 1: Improve Academics and Student Achievement at every School Site

- **Inclusive Classroom Practices** - (A) Align the resources and staffing within the Office of Teaching and Learning with the recommendations from the SY21-22 program review to support the districtwide increase in students identified as English learners to increase coaching, feedback, and support for ESL teachers in implementing programming that meets the specific needs of EL students; (B) Improve professional learning for district leaders to ensure all Special Education services continue to align with IDEA, and increase support for special education teachers across the district to further improve the quality of teaching and learning experiences for students.
- **Differentiated Autonomy and Support Implement** - phase 1 of the district's centralized service delivery and support model for schools that was conceptualized in SY2021/2022 and further improve the model through (1) defined metrics and processes for entering and exiting Renaissance designation and (2) revised planning guardrails for Renaissance budget supplements based on school improvement needs.
- **Universal PreK** - Expand access to full time PreK programming for 4-year olds across the City by adding additional full-time seats through new partner agreements with early learning providers and targeted communications outreach to families of eligible children.
- **Portrait of a Graduate** - Implement phase 3 of the Portrait of a Graduate initiative, increasing equitable access to school-based programming and strengthening vertical alignment and strategic supports to increase student engagement, academic performance, and the number of Black and Latinx students enrolled in advanced coursework.

Ms. Martin stated that one (1) goal area should have a concrete measure and that Universal PreK-K could have a number attached to it.

Ms. Doherty asked what would be significant data particularly with Portrait of a Graduate. She stated that she would like to see the percentage of 9th graders passing and measure it against pre-pandemic percentages. She stated it is 46% which is not even half of the class. She stated in 2018-2019 it was 53%. She stated that we need to cut that rate down and measure it. She stated chronic absenteeism was at 38% last year and in 2018-2019 it was 17.5%. She stated that we want smart goals throughout the district.

Ms. Thompson asked if chronic absences recognize that they were COVID absences.

Superintendent Boyd stated no and that's why you see an increase.

Ms. Martin stated that 9th graders is a compelling statistic and asked if those were the numbers shared from the 1st quarter.

Ms. Doherty stated that the information stated was from the Department of Education for school year 2020-2021. She stated that it was data that used to be provided to the Committee, but they don't get it anymore so she looked up these figures on her own.

Ms. Martin asked Superintendent Boyd if the Committee would be able to get that by September.

Superintendent Boyd stated that they can pull the data and he agrees that the 9th grade is a critical year. He stated he will take a look at it.

Goal 2: Improve Operational Efficiency across the System

- **Diversity Recruitment and Hiring** - (A) Implement phase 2 of the Diversifying Teacher Leaders program and Affinity Groups to create spaces for community building and support among staff, shifting school work culture toward being more culturally responsive and inclusive; (B) Build on past work to neutralize any remaining systemic barriers in the hiring process at schools and departments by utilizing a Staff Diversity Index and hiring dashboard to provide more relevant information to hiring managers, including information on past decisions and trends, so they can make more fully informed decisions.
- **Data-Driven Decision-Making** - (A) Develop, customize, and implement improved and standardized data visualization tools across the district, including key performance metrics, and facilitate utilization by district and school-level staff for cycles of rapid improvement on high priority focus areas; (B) Refine and rollout a school-level performance dashboard to monitor progress on key metrics throughout the year to target support for school improvement.
- **Wage Equity** - Conduct a comprehensive, externally supported, compensation classification study to evaluate both the internal and external equity of compensation in consideration of duties and lengths of the work year.
- **Enterprise Resource Planning** - Implement phase 2 of the ERP conversion, collaborating with the City on converting manual processes within HR and payroll to a more automated platform, consistent with weighing cost, staffing systems, contract provisions and SC policies, including the rollout of a new bi-weekly pay schedule for all employees.

Goal 3: Improve Ensure that every School is Safe and Welcoming to every Student and every Family, Every day

- **Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining** - Practices (A) Conduct a comprehensive analysis of student access to arts and cultural activities in and out-of-school time to inform opportunities for increased partnerships with cultural organizations to provide arts and cultural experiences for the District's diverse student populations; (B) Create a unit of study that centers on the Indigenous, Black and immigrant history in the United States with a focus on the local Lowell context.; (C) Lead school teams through a strategic review of bias in curriculum to support the integration of related targets during the spring, school-based QIP planning process.
- **Mental Health and Wellness** - Develop an updated, comprehensive mental health and wellness plan to (1) improve tier I, II and III mental health and SEL supports for students, (2) increase support to social workers, (3) improve communication to schools and (4) further improve implementation of the DESSA tool.
- **Capital Improvements** - Develop a collaborative, interagency proposal to support the City's efforts to improve the condition of selected facilities across the district to provide safer learning environments for students and staff, including (1) initiating a multi-year,

community-based capital improvement plan facilitated by an external agency, and (2) proposing a timely and appropriate portion of ESSER funds to utilize.

- **Student Registration and Placement** - Implement key changes to the student enrollment process as identified through the 2022 audit which includes establishing an appointment system for families to expedite the document review and placement process and strengthening health services supports for families to expedite medical compliance with immunizations.

Ms. Martin stated that they're looking to see the action in the goals and by the end of June we should see this.

Superintendent Boyd stated that the facilities department can't control the DPW.

Ms. Martin stated that we need to be zeroing in on a finite amount we plan on spending in the next two (2) years and that we need to be tracking. She stated we have one-time monies and should have target goals.

GOAL 4: Increase Community Engagement and Empower Families as Partners in the Educational Process.

- **Full-Service Community Schools** - Implement year 1 of the full-service community school model at Renaissance Schools, including a communications plan to increase understanding of the Community Schools strategy and family awareness of how to access wrap around supports for students, and the development of baseline metrics to increase the usage of health services provided through on-site health centers or traveling health services (such as dental screening and optical services).
- **Parent Leadership Institute** - Expand the District's multi-generational, family literacy initiative through the development and facilitation of workshops and family learning events on the topics of US/Lowell Education System, college and career readiness, and social emotional learning, and establish a partnership with a Post-Secondary Institution to formalize a Family Leadership pathway for families.
- **Communication and Outreach to Families of Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds** - (A) Increase access to information for linguistically diverse families through the development of family circles and family networks and strengthening the use of translation/interpretation tools across the district; (B) Develop feedback mechanisms for tracking the quality and quantity of translation/interpretation services being provided at schools.
- **Hispanic Student Success Taskforce** - Collaborate with community partners and leaders to implement co-developed plans for (1) addressing 9 th grade credit completion through strengthened family engagement/family communication; (2) implement a college and career focused family leadership strand within the Family Leadership Institute; (3) conduct a feasibility study for the integration of a dual language magnet program within the district.

Ms. Thompson stated that we need to be more succinct around diversity and equity hiring including the process and how we measure it. She asked about how much anti-bias racism training are employees/principals getting. She stated we need to make that more finite.

Ms. Martin stated that now we have the opportunity to get that kind of training.

Superintendent Boyd stated that yes, and that a presentation is going to be made regarding this at the next School Committee meeting and we should be able to get something from that.

Ms. Thompson stated that we should tie it into the evaluation and would the district consider student evaluations (like giving the seniors an exit evaluation).

Superintendent Boyd stated that it goes into bargaining agreements and that the word evaluation couldn't be used, but it could be called a review.

Superintendent Boyd spoke about Family & Engagement and building out the Family Leadership Academy Institute and building out capacity for families.

Ms. Thompson stated that there is a gap with the Latinx population and what measurables can we get around that. She asked if it could be 9th to 10th grade or attendance. She stated that population has been suffering and a metric needs to be set up.

Superintendent Boyd stated that the Hispanic Taskforce could qualify something there and it has been a focus in the community as a whole.

Ms. Delrossi stated we need to help families navigate the Special Education system and perhaps we can build in workshops under Community & Family Engagement.

Superintendent Boyd stated he'll take a look and provide feedback.

Mr. Lay stated he would like to see data included on students whose English isn't their first language as well as low income families.

Martin stated that she'd like to see this by the next School Committee meeting.

Superintendent Boyd stated that he's unsure about the next meeting because he's been following health and safety protocols this week.

Ms. Martin then asked Attorney McKenna, 1st City Solicitor for an update on the bid process for acquiring outside counsel for the internal complaints Investigation.

Attorney McKenna informed the Committee that the Law Department has interviewed three (3) of the four (4) firms from Boston. He stated they will make a recommendation after the last one (1) is interviewed.

Ms. Martin stated that the Committee ultimately makes the selection and would like to see all the proposals (background, experience, etc.)

Ms. Doherty stated that she thought the Committee was going to be involved and that the process wasn't going to be restricted by 30B. She stated that she has concerns regarding experience. She stated that the full Committee need to be a part of this. Do the attorneys have experience with MCAD, employment law? She asked if there was a timeline and she doesn't want this to drag out for a year.

Attorney McKenna stated there was a scope of services and that there is only a small amount of firms. He stated he will get their rates and then make a recommendation to the City Solicitor.

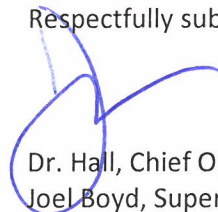
Ms. Doherty asked if a proposal was put out.

Attorney McKenna stated that he received some names from experts. He stated that Attorney Anderson helped and he will provide the names and then the Committee can proceed. He stated that hopefully by the end of the week and then a week to review.

Chairperson Martin made a motion to receive materials within a week and to poll the Committee to have a Human Resources & Labor Relations Subcommittee the week ending January 28, 2023 and to have the Law Department present again; seconded by Mr. Lay. 3 yeas APPROVED

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to adjourn at 7:21 p.m.; seconded by Mr. Lay. 3 yeas APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Dr. Hall', is written over the printed name.

Dr. Hall, Chief Operations Officer for Dr.
Joel Boyd, Superintendent and
Secretary, Lowell School Committee

JPH/mes